



Olongapo, Philippines
Bronze Star Medal

Staff Sergeant Carlo A. Alcazar

Sgt. 1st Class Drew C. Kimmey, Capt. Stephen P. Ward and Staff Sgt. Carlo A. Alcazar, members of Civil Affairs Team 745, were recently recognized for their performance during an Afghanistan mission last November. The three soldiers were recognized for their efforts in rescuing a Special Forces team leader, who was also the ground forces commander that day.

CA Team 745 was stationed at Firebase Cobra in Oruzgan, Afghanistan, with special operations detachments from the 3rd Special Forces Group, members of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police. On Nov. 2, 2007, the teams and their Afghan counterparts left the firebase to visit the village of Sarsina to conduct a medical capabilities mission as well as a humanitarian aid drop. Upon arrival, they discovered it had been evacuated and that Taliban fighters were entrenched into several fighting positions in an attempt to ambush forces in the area.

Alcazar reported only three families came in for medical treatment. The families told the soldiers the Taliban made the other people leave the village, but that they stay, having nowhere to go. "What was alarming," Ward said later, "was the buildings had locks and barricaded doors, which was a clear indication that the village wasn't abandoned, but had been turned into a defensible position." All three felt it was only a matter of time before the firefight would begin.

The teams were quickly engaged by 300 Taliban fighters. After an hour of fighting, two vehicles were pulled to the rear of the fight after being disabled. This left the ground forces commander to the front of the coalition lines and in jeopardy of being overrun. At this point, Ward, the team leader for 745, radioed to the ground forces commander, who was pinned down in a vulnerable building, that his was on its way. Ward later said he and Alcazar went because they were the closest truck and the others were busy providing cover. Unfortunately, the team's vehicle crashed into an enemy fighting position and became immobile, knocking Ward and Alcazar momentarily unconscious.

After they regained consciousness, Alcazar took to reloading ammunition belts, enabling Kimmey, the gunner, to continue to engage enemy forces. Ward exited the vehicle and directed his team to dismount and move to cover. Kimmey remained in the turret, providing cover for the team and allowing them to reach the ground forces commander. He stayed even though he knew the enemy was setting up mortar positions to destroy the truck he was firing from.

Kimmey was able to keep the Taliban from overrunning the soldiers with the .50-caliber gun. In the process, he was drawing a majority of the enemy fire. Ward reported the enemy was about 50 to 100 meters away at this point. Team 745 moved to the ground commander's position and helped in the recovery of the commander and the casualties. All of this was done, while under "continual, accurate and effective" enemy fire.

Since the team's 745's vehicle was immobile, it was stripped of all sensitive equipment, and its gun was dismantled to prevent the enemy from gaining off of the team's loss. Once team 745 sterilized their truck, they had no choice but to run beside the Special Forces vehicle, using it as cover, until they reached safety, because there was no room for them on the truck. All three of them ran alongside the truck until they reached a checkpoint and mounted up into another vehicle for the ride back to firebase Cobra.

During the civil affairs award ceremony honoring all three for their heroic acts, Maj. Gen. John F. Mulholland, said, "The words can't do justice, nor can the medal on your chest convey what they went up against."